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PREFACE

FEW philosophical poems in the English language have been more widely read than the poem in which the genius of FitzGerald has introduced us to that of the Persian, Omar Khayyám. More critics than one have remarked on the curious likeness between the philosophy of Omar and that of the Roman, Lucretius, who also, like the Persian, expressed his philosophy in verse. The difference, however, between the two is not less curious than the likeness; and it occurred to me that it would be a not uninteresting experiment to render parts of Lucretius into the stanza employed by Omar—or rather the English equivalent with which FitzGerald has made us familiar—in order that, by thus reducing

them to a common literary denominator, a comparison between them might be more readily made.

The philosophy of Lucretius, however, has, like that of Omar, an interest for us in the present day which is far more than literary. Like Omar, he deals with that precise train of reflection which scientific knowledge, as distinct from the assumptions of faith, tends to rouse in the minds of all who think; and the intellectual position of Lucretius was, in many ways, even nearer than Omar's to that of the modern world. Lucretius was, so far as the knowledge of his time would allow him to be, as completely and as consciously a scientific man and a physicist as Darwin, or Huxley, or any of our contemporary evolutionists. Indeed his doctrines, allowing for certain inevitable differences, are astonishingly similar to theirs; and his general conception of the conclusions to which all science is tending may be said to be absolutely identical. He disclaimed the character

of an original thinker or discoverer, representing himself merely as a disciple of his great master, Epicurus; but he made the philosophy of his master altogether his own, and as such we may here speak of it.

His main object as a physicist was to show, by physical reasoning, that life and matter are parts of the same order of things, and that the soul of man results from the same general process as that which results in all other sensible phenomena—in the body of man, in the flowers, the seas, the mountains, in the whole frame of the earth, and in all the suns and stars. Earth and the system to which it belongs he regarded as but an infinitesimal portion of a universe of similar systems which are scattered through endless space, and have always been forming themselves, persisting, and then again decomposing, for all time—if that can be called time which is endless. The whole of this limitless universe, "which decomposes but to recompose," con-

sists, he maintained, of atoms aggregated in various forms; and beyond space, and atoms, and the laws in accordance with which the atoms act, nothing exists, has existed, or ever can exist; consciousness, life, soul, whether in man or animals, being merely an atomic tissue of an exceptionally subtle kind.

The worlds, and in particular the earth and all the things belonging to it, have come to be what they are by a process of natural selection. The atoms throughout infinite time make an infinite variety of combinations; but those alone have persisted which were fit to persist, the others resolving presently into their component parts. Animals and men are the result of the same process. They represent the forms of life that alone have been fit to live, out of innumerable forms that have appeared, and have perished because they have been not fit. Man's senses were not designed for him in order that he might put

them to their uses; but because he has them, and can use them, and can maintain his life in consequence, the human race remains.

The methods by which Lucretius endeavours to support these conclusions are essentially the same as those of the modern physicist. He endeavours to support them by reasoning from the known and the observable to the unknown. He takes the most familiar phenomena of nature, and of daily and domestic life—such as the smell of a lamp when extinguished, the dancing of motes in a sunbeam, the appearance of maggots in carrion—and seeks to show that all the mysteries of the cosmos are explicable by reference to a sequence of such cause and effect as every day we can verify by the evidence of our own senses. The narrow limits of his knowledge prevented him from imparting to his system anything which resembles the actuality of modern science. In advancing from the

known to the unknown, the scientific thinker of to-day plants each successive footstep on some discovery of what actually is—testing his discoveries by a series of minute experiments. Lucretius, as soon as he passed beyond the region of ordinary observation, had to content himself with what, reasoning by rude analogy, ordinary observation suggested to him as things that might be.

In its details, therefore, his science is not science at all; as the reader, who cares to do so, may very easily see by studying his highly curious and fantastic theory of vision. But though in its details his doctrine has little more reality than a dream, it approaches, in its premises, the latest theories of to-day; and its practical conclusion, so far as human life is concerned, is identical with that of the latest scientific philosophy. This conclusion is that all conscious life comes into existence with the body, and disappears with its dissolution; that it is not the miraculous creation of any deity, or deities; and that

if any deities exist, they emerge from the nature of things, just as man does, and have no concern with his actions. It is doubtful whether Lucretius believed in their existence at all. In any case he regarded them as an essentially negligible quantity; and even should they be aware of man's existence whilst he lived, man, death being the end of him, passes wholly beyond their ken. There is no knowledge in the grave. There is no other life but this. Such was the sum and substance of the message of Lucretius to his contemporaries.

This is a doctrine which, willingly or unwillingly, many philosophers have taught besides Lucretius. But other philosophers have, as a rule, taught it either as a doctrine of sadness and despair, or as an inducement to voluptuous licence. Omar presents it to us as both. He is alternately possessed by the tragedy of the inevitable end, and by the desire to wring from existence every pleasure that it can yield us, before the

night comes, in which no more pleasure can be taken. But Lucretius addresses his hearers in a very different tone. Omar's advice to man—

> Drink, for we know not whence we came, nor why;
> Drink, for we know not why we go, nor where,

is rejected by him as a piece of ignorant folly which defeats its own ends. The only true pleasures, he teaches, are found not in excess but in moderation; and though even these are not perhaps very great, they are better than anything we can gain for ourselves by the excitement and agitation of excess.

He differs, however, from Omar in a deeper way than this, and from other philosophers also who are adherents of the same creed. To them the extinction of life seems in itself a sad thing. Lucretius proclaims it as a blessing, a relief, an emancipation. That man has no other life is the crowning truth of science. It is the truth for the sake of proving which—of

placing it beyond all doubt—the science of the nature of things is alone worth studying.

The reason which he gives us for this attitude of mind is interesting, and throws a remarkable light on the spiritual conditions of his day. Life, according to him, would be naturally tolerable enough, and very often happy, if it were not for one thing; and this is the universal dread, not of death itself, but of the destiny that awaits us after death. Mankind at large, he says, labours under the horrible belief, which is always in the background of their minds, that they are born under the wrath of God, or of the gods, and that these monstrous powers have called them into life only in order that, after death, they may torment them in hell for ever. Here is really the root of all human sadness. It is the fear of what the gods will do to us —those all-seeing angry masters, vile in their vindictive righteousness, gathering where they have not strawed.

Let us once, says Lucretius, rid ourselves of this nightmare of the imagination, and the aching of our hearts will cease. We shall rise up and be free.

Science it is which accomplishes for us the great deliverance; and it does so by demonstrating these two cardinal truths—first, that no god, or gods, of the kind in question, exist; and secondly, that even if they did exist, they would be absolutely impotent to wreak their malice on us after death, because after death there will be nothing left of us for them to torture.

It is the latter of these considerations on which he dwells most persistently, and in which he appears to find his well of deepest comfort; and for this there is the following reason. In spite of his doctrine that life, if bodily pain and a fear of the gods be absent, is naturally pleasing rather than otherwise, he is haunted by a conviction that there is an inherent bitterness in it

after all. Though the delights of love may seem to be never so satisfying, yet

> A bitter something in the midmost hours
> Of joy starts up and stings amongst the flowers.

And again, after he has triumphantly announced the completeness with which "immortal death" relieves mortal man from the fear of future suffering, he proceeds to argue that seated in man's very self is some source of restlessness, discontent, and sorrow, by which life is still vitiated, even though all fear of hell and of the anger of the gods be done away with. Self, he says, is the secret malady of each of us—for ever unsatisfied, for ever ill at ease; and death alone can free us from this foe that is of our own household.

In admitting and insisting on this fact Lucretius is not perhaps quite consistent as a thinker; but the feelings of few men are entirely in accordance with their thoughts, and the union in the poet of a note of

subdued pessimism with one of courageous though hardly enthusiastic optimism affects the mind more deeply than either could have done separately.

The following poem, though a considerable number of the stanzas closely follow the sentences, and some even the very words of the original, can hardly be called a translation in the usual acceptation of the word. The work of Lucretius comprises between seven and eight thousand lines; the following poem comprises not so many as five hundred. Of the work of Lucretius, by far the larger part consists of what is not so much poetry as scientific expositions in verse. Its poetry is confined to various exquisite illustrations taken from scenes and aspects of external nature, and to the moral teaching which the poet draws from his natural science. His purely scientific principles I have contented myself with merely indicating, and it is his moral teaching which I have mainly attempted to reproduce. This

is scattered throughout his work in a variety of isolated passages; as a consequence of which he very often repeats himself, and does but imperfect justice to the continuity of his thoughts and sentiments. I have done my best to exhibit them in a continuous form; and, in choosing the passages on which the following poem is founded, I have disregarded altogether their original order, taking them from this place and from that, as seemed most suitable for my purpose.

There are very few of the stanzas which have not some equivalent in the original; but most of them are summings up of the tendency of the thought of Lucretius, or echoes of his feelings, rather than reproductions of his words. In order that the reader may form some judgment as to this point for himself, I have appended to the poem those lines of the original which have been more or less closely translated, together with others representative of the meaning and train of

argument which the poem aims at reproducing. The Latin lines are translated in literal prose for the benefit of those who are not classical scholars.

In one or two stanzas I have made use of phrases taken from great writers which are household words with all. One of these is from Tennyson, two from Shakespeare, and two or three from the Bible. For doing this I have the precedent of Lucretius himself, who lays Ennius under the same kind of contribution. In the two former cases my object has been to convey to the reader a sense of the vital identity of modern thought with ancient, and in the latter to convey to him a sense of the strange contrast between the gospel of science, which, in the days of Lucretius, as in our own, had no hope to offer us but that of eternal death, and the gospel of the Christian religion, which offers us eternal life.

This contrast is made additionally interesting by the

fact that Lucretius died only fifty years before Christ was born. In Christ originated that great spiritual and intellectual movement which succeeded, for so many ages, in rendering the Lucretian philosophy at once useless and incredible to the progressive races of mankind; but now, after a lapse of nearly two thousand years, the conditions which evoked that philosophy are once more reappearing. Once more we are confronted with two solutions of life—that which takes as its basis some creative act of faith, and that which is based solely on the observation of such phenomena as are apprehended by the senses, can be expressed in rigorous formulæ, or leave behind them objective records of their occurrence. But though these old conditions are being revived, they are being revived with great differences. Religion as represented by Christianity is by no means the same thing as the religion which excited the contempt and indignation of Lucretius. The Christian religion, in

spite of the Christian Hell, offers to mankind not a future of torment only, but a future of rest and peace, which possibly even Lucretius might have regarded as preferable, if true, to that which he anticipated in the grave. Religion as represented by Christianity is no longer the enemy of man. It is man's friend and comforter; but it is a friend whose credentials seem to many to have become doubtful. Science, on the other hand, has triumphantly extended its dominions. It has demonstrated, with an accuracy beyond the dreams of Lucretius, the all-pervading presence of uniform and endless laws. It has traced the steps by which mind slowly develops itself out of matter. If it has not shown us that consciousness is a mere function of the brain, it has shown us that without the brain, we can, even if it exists, have no knowledge of it, and that without the senses it could have no thinkable content; and has strengthened the argument that, if the evidence of faith is repudiated,

the dissolution of the individual body and the individual life are simultaneous. The result is that the choice between religion and science has become in the present day even more vital to man, and fraught with deeper issues, than it was in the days when Lucretius wrote his poem on "The Nature of Things," and preached his gospel of a redemption, not *from* the grave, but *in* it. Those, however, who, under changed conditions, are adherents of the principles which he shares with the latest scientists of to-day, can hardly find the only hope which is open to them expressed by any writer with a loftier and more poignant dignity than that with which they will find it expressed by the Roman disciple of Epicurus.

LUCRETIUS ON LIFE AND DEATH

IN THE METRE OF OMAR KHAYYÁM

I

Suave mari magno

I

WHEN storms blow loud, 'tis sweet to watch at ease
From shore, the sailor labouring with the seas :
Because the sense, not that such pains are his,
But that they are not ours, must always please.

II

Sweet for the cragsman, from some high retreat
Watching the plains below where legions meet,
To await the moment when the walls of war
Thunder and clash together. But more sweet,

III

Sweeter by far on Wisdom's rampired height
To pace serene the porches of the light,
  And thence look down—down on the purblind herd
Seeking and never finding in the night

IV

The road to peace—the peace that all might hold,
But yet is missed by young men and by old,
  Lost in the strife for palaces and powers,
The axes, and the lictors, and the gold.

V

Oh sightless eyes! Oh hands that toil in vain!
Not such your needs. Your nature's needs are twain,
  And only twain: and these are to be free—
Your minds from terror, and your bones from pain.

VI

Unailing limbs, a calm unanxious breast—
Grant Nature these, and she will do the rest.
  Nature will bring you, be you rich or poor,
Perhaps not much—at all events her best.

VII

What though no statued youths from wall and wall
Strew light along your midnight festival,
  With golden hands, nor beams from Lebanon
Keep the lyre's languor lingering through the hall,

VIII

Yours is the table 'neath the high-whispering trees;
Yours is the lyre of leaf and stream and breeze,
  The golden flagon, and the echoing dome—
Lapped in the Spring, what care you then for these?

IX

Sleep is no sweeter on the ivory bed
Than yours on moss; and fever's shafts are sped
  As clean through silks damasked for dreaming kings,
As through the hood that wraps the poor man's head.

X

What then, if all the prince's glittering store
Yields to his body not one sense the more,
  Nor any ache or fever of them all
Is barred out by bronze gates or janitor—

XI

What shall the palace, what the proud domain
Do for the mind—vain splendours of the vain?
  How shall these minister to a mind diseased,
Or raze one written trouble from the brain?

XII

Unless you think that conscience with its stings
And misery, fears the outward pomp of things—
  Fears to push swords and sentinels aside,
And sit the assessor of the kings of kings.

XIII

The mind! Ay—there's the rub. The root is there
Of that one malady which all men share.
  It gleams between the haggard lids of joy;
It burns a canker in the heart of care.

XIV

Within the gold bowl, when the feast is set,
It lurks. 'Tis bitter in the labourer's sweat.
  Feed thou the starving, and thou bring'st it back—
Back to the starving, who alone forget.

XV

Oh you who under silken curtains lie,
And you whose only roof-tree is the sky,
  What is the curse that blights your lives alike?
Not that you hate to live, but fear to die.

XVI

Fear is the poison. Wheresoe'er you go,
Out of the skies above, the clods below,
  The sense thrills through you of some pitiless Power
Who scowls at once your father and your foe;

XVII

Who lets his children wander at their whim,
Choosing their road, as though not bound by him:
  But all their life is rounded with a shade,
And every road goes down behind the rim;

XVIII

And there behind the rim, the swift, the lame,
At different paces, but their end the same,
  Into the dark shall one by one go down,
Where the great furnace shakes its hair of flame.

XIX

Oh ye who cringe and cower before the throne
Of him whose heart is fire, whose hands are stone,
  Who shall deliver you from this death in life—
Strike off your chains, and make your souls your own?

II

E tenebris tantis

I

COME unto me all ye that labour. Ye
Whose souls are heavy-laden, come to me,
And I will lead you forth by streams that heal,
And feed you with the truth that sets men free.

II

Not from myself, poor souls with fear foredone,
Not from myself I have it, but from one
At whose approach the lamps of all the wise
Fade and go out like stars before the sun.

III

I am the messenger of one that saith
His saving sentence through my humbler breath :
And would you know his gospel's name, 'tis this—
The healing gospel of the eternal death.

IV

A teacher he, the latchet of whose shoe
I am not worthy stooping to undo :
And on your aching brows and weary eyes
His saving sentence shall descend like dew.

V

For this is he that dared the almighty foe,
Looked up, and struck the Olympian blow for blow,
And dragged the phantom from his fancied skies—
The Samian Sage—the first of those that know.

VI

Him not the splintered lightnings, nor the roll
Of thunders daunted. Undismayed, his soul
Rose, and outsoared the thunder, plumbed the abyss,
And scanned the wheeling worlds from pole to pole;

VII

And from the abyss brought back for you and me
The secret that alone can set men free.
He showed us how the worlds and worlds began,
And what things can, and what things cannot be.

VIII

And as I hear his clarion, I—I too
See earth and heaven laid open to my view;
And lo, from earth and heaven the curse is gone,
And all the things that are, are born anew.

IX

Vision divine! Far off in crystal air,
What forms are these? The immortal Gods are there.
  Ay—but what Gods? Not those that trembling men
Would bribe with offerings, and appease with prayer.

X

Far off they lie, where storm-winds never blow,
Nor ever storm-cloud moves across the glow;
  Nor frost of winter nips them, nor their limbs
Feel the white fluttering of one plume of snow.

XI

At ease they dream, and make perpetual cheer
Far off. From them we nothing have to fear,
  Nothing to hope. How should the calm ones hate?
The tearless know the meaning of a tear?

XII

We leave, we bless them, in their homes on high.
No atheist is my master, he, nor I :
  But when I turn, and seek the stain of Hell
Which flames and smokes along the nadir sky,

XIII

Even as I gaze the ancient shapes of ill
Flicker and fade. From off the accursed hill
  The huge stone melts. The Ixionian wheel
Rests, and the barkings of the hound are still.

XIV

The damned forbear to shriek, their wounds to bleed,
The fires to torture, and the worm to feed ;
  And stars are glittering through the rift, where once
The stream went wailing 'twixt its leagues of reed ;

XV

And all the pageant goes; whilst I, with awe,
See in its place the things my master saw;
  See in its place the three eternal things—
The only three—atoms and space and law.

XVI

Hearken, oh earth! Hearken, oh heavens bereft
Of your old gods, these ageless Fates are left,
  Who are at once the makers and the made,
Who are at once the weavers and the weft.

XVII

All things but these arise and fail and fall,
From flowers to stars—the great things and the small;
  Whilst the great Sum of all things rests the same,
The all-creating, all-devouring All.

XVIII

Oh you who with me, in my master's car,
Up from the dens of faith have risen afar,
  Do not you see at last on yonder height
A light that burns and beacons like a star?

XIX

Do not you sniff the morning in our flight?
The air turns cool, the dusk team turns to white.
  Night's coursers catch the morning on their manes;
The dews are on the pasterns of the night.

XX

At last we are near the secret, oh my friend.
Patience awhile! We soon shall reach the end—
  The gospel of the everlasting death.
Incline your ear to reason, and attend.

III

Sic igitur magni quoque circum moenia mundi
Expugnata dabunt labem putresque ruinas.

I

NO single thing abides ; but all things flow.
Fragment to fragment clings—the things thus grow
Until we know and name them. By degrees
They melt, and are no more the things we know.

II

Globed from the atoms falling slow or swift
I see the suns, I see the systems lift
Their forms ; and even the systems and the suns
Shall go back slowly to the eternal drift.

III

Thou too, oh earth—thine empires, lands, and seas—
Least, with thy stars, of all the galaxies,
  Globed from the drift like these, like these thou too
Shalt go. Thou art going, hour by hour, like these.

IV

Nothing abides. Thy seas in delicate haze
Go off; those moonéd sands forsake their place;
  And where they are, shall other seas in turn
Mow with their scythes of whiteness other bays.

V

Lo, how the terraced towers, and monstrous round
Of league-long ramparts rise from out the ground,
  With gardens in the clouds. Then all is gone,
And Babylon is a memory and a mound.

VI

Observe this dew-drenched rose of Tyrian grain—
A rose to-day. But you will ask in vain
  To-morrow what it is; and yesterday
It was the dust, the sunshine and the rain.

VII

This bowl of milk, the pitch on yonder jar,
Are strange and far-bound travellers come from far.
  This is a snow-flake that was once a flame—
The flame was once the fragment of a star.

VIII

Round, angular, soft, brittle, dry, cold, warm,
Things *are* their qualities: things *are* their form—
  And these in combination, even as bees,
Not singly but combined, make up the swarm:

IX

And when the qualities like bees on wing,
Having a moment clustered, cease to cling,
  As the thing dies without its qualities,
So die the qualities without the thing.

X

Where is the coolness when no cool winds blow?
Where is the music when the lute lies low?
  Are not the redness and the red rose one,
And the snow's whiteness one thing with the snow?

XI

Even so, now mark me, here we reach the goal
Of Science, and in little have the whole—
  Even as the redness and the rose are one,
So with the body one thing is the soul.

XII

For, as our limbs and organs all unite
To make our sum of suffering and delight,
  And, without eyes and ears and touch and tongue,
Were no such things as taste and sound and sight,

XIII

So without these we all in vain shall try
To find the thing that gives them unity—
  The thing to which each whispers, "Thou' art thou"—
The soul which answers each, "And I am I."

XIV

What! shall the dateless worlds in dust be blown
Back to the unremembered and unknown,
  And this frail Thou—this flame of yesterday—
Burn on, forlorn, immortal, and alone?

XV

Did Nature, in the nurseries of the night
Tend it for this—Nature whose heedless might,
  Like some poor shipwrecked sailor, takes the babe,
And casts it bleating on the shores of light?

XVI

What is it there? A cry is all it is.
It knows not if its limbs be yours or his.
  Less than that cry the babe was yesterday.
The man to-morrow shall be less than this.

XVII

Tissue by tissue to a soul he grows,
As leaf by leaf the rose becomes the rose.
  Tissue from tissue rots; and, as the Sun
Goes from the bubbles when they burst, he goes.

XVIII

Ah, mark those pearls of Sunrise! Fast and free
Upon the waves they are dancing. Souls shall be
Things that outlast their bodies, when each spark
Outlasts its wave, each wave outlasts the sea.

XIX

The seeds that once were we take flight and fly,
Winnowed to earth, or whirled along the sky,
Not lost but disunited. Life lives on.
It is the lives, the lives, the lives, that die.

XX

They go beyond recapture and recall,
Lost in the all-indissoluble All:—
Gone like the rainbow from the fountain's foam,
Gone like the spindrift shuddering down the squall.

XXI

Flakes of the water, on the waters cease!
Soul of the body, melt and sleep like these.
  Atoms to atoms—weariness to rest—
Ashes to ashes—hopes and fears to peace!

XXII

Oh Science, lift aloud thy voice that stills
The pulse of fear, and through the conscience thrills—
  Thrills through the conscience with the news of peace—
How beautiful thy feet are on the hills!

IV

Nil igitur mors est

I

DEATH is for us, then, nothing—a mere name
For the mere noiseless ending of a flame.
It hurts us not, for there is nothing left
To hurt : and as of old, when Carthage came

II

To battle, we and ours felt nought at all,
Nor quailed to see city and farm and stall
Flare into dust, and all our homeless fields
Trampled beneath the hordes of Hannibal,

III

But slumbered on and on, nor cared a jot,
Deaf to the stress and tumult, though the lot
  Of things was doubtful, to which lords should fall
The rule of all—but we, we heeded not—

IV

So when that wedlock of the flesh and mind
Which makes us what we are, shall cease to bind,
  And mind and flesh, being mind and flesh no more,
Powdered to dust go whistling down the wind,

V

Even as our past was shall our future be.
Others may start and tremble, but not we,
  Though heaven with the disbanded dust of earth
Be dark, or earth be drowned beneath the sea.

VI

Why then torment ourselves, and shrink aghast
Like timorous children from the great At Last?
  For though the Future holds its face averse,
See that hid face reflected in the past,

VII

As in a shield. Look! Does some monster seem
To threaten there? Is that the Gorgon's gleam?
  What meets your eyes is nothing—or a face
Even gentler than a sleep without a dream.

VIII

And yet—ah thou who art about to cease
From toil, and lapse into perpetual peace,
  Why will the mourners stand about thy bed,
And sting thy parting hour with words like these?—

IX

"Never shalt thou behold thy dear home more,
Never thy wife await thee at thy door,
  Never again thy little climbing boy
A father's kindness in thine eyes explore.

X

"All you have toiled for, all you have loved," they
  say,
"Is gone, is taken in a single day;"
  But never add, "All memory, all desire,
All love—these likewise shall have passed away."

XI

Ah ignorant mourners! Did they only see
The fate which Death indeed lays up for thee,
  How would they sing a different song from this—
"Beloved, not thou the sufferer—not thou; but we.

XII

"Thou hast lost us all; but thou, redeemed from pain,
Shalt sleep the sleep that kings desire in vain.
Thou hast left us all; and lo, for us, for us,
A void that never shall be filled again.

XIII

"Not thine, but ours, to see the sharp flames thrust
Their daggers through the hands we clasped in trust;
To see the dear lips crumble, and at last
To brood above a bitter pile of dust.

XIV

"Not thine, but ours is this. All pain is fled
From thee, and we are wailing in thy stead,
Not for the dead that leave the loved behind,
But for the living that must lose their dead."

V

Denique si vocem

I

OH ye of little faith, who fear to scan
The inevitable hour that ends your span,
If me you doubt, let Nature find a voice;
And will not Nature reason thus with man?

II

"Fools," she will say, "whose petulant hearts and speech
Dare to arraign, and long to overreach,
Mine ordinance—I see two schools of fools.
Silent be both, and I will speak with each.

III

"And first for thee, whose whimpering lips complain
That all life's wine for thee is poured in vain,
  That each hour spills it like a broken cup—
Life is for thee the loss, and Death the gain.

IV

"Death shall not mock thee. Death at last shall slake
Your life's thirst from a cup that will not break.
  Cease then your mutterings. Drain that wine-cup dry,
Nor fear the wine. Why should you wish to wake?

V

"And next for thee, who hast eaten and drunk with zest
At my most delicate table of the best,
  Yet when the long feast ends art loth to go,
Why not, oh fool, rise like a sated guest—

VI

"Rise like some guest who has drunk well and deep,
And now no longer can his eyelids keep
From closing; rise and hie thee home to rest,
And enter calmly on the unending sleep?

VII

"What, will you strive with me, and say me 'No,'
Like some distempered child; and whisper low,
'Give me but one life more, one hour, to drink
One draught of some new sweetness ere I go'?

VIII

"Oh three times fool! For could I only do
The impossible thing you ask, and give to you
Not one life more, but many, 'twere in vain.
You would find nothing sweet, and nothing new.

IX

"Pleasure and power, the friend's, the lover's kiss,
Would bring you weariness in place of bliss.
You would turn aside, and say, 'I have known them all,
And am long tired of this, and this, and this.'

X

"Nature can nothing do she has not done—
Nature, to whom a thousand lives are one:
And though a thousand lives were yours to endure,
You would find no new thing beneath the Sun.

XI

"Children of ended joy, and ended care,
I tell you both, take back, take back your prayer;
For one life's joys and loves, or one life's load,
Are all, are all, that one man's bones can bear."

XII

Such, if the mute Omnipotence were free
To speak, which it is not, its words would be.
Could you gainsay them? Lend your ears once more,
Not to the mute Omnipotence, but me.

VI

In vita sunt omnia nobis

I

FOR I, if still you are haunted by the fear
Of Hell, have one more secret for your ear.
Hell is indeed no fable; but, my friends,
Hell and its torments are not there, but here.

II

No Tantalus down below with craven head
Cowers from the hovering rock: but here instead
A Tantalus lives in each fond wretch who fears
An angry God, and views the heavens with dread.

III

No Tityos there lies prone, and lives to feel
The beak of the impossible vulture steal
  Day after day out of his bleeding breast
The carrion of the insatiable meal.

IV

But you and I are Tityos, when the dire
Poison of passion turns our blood to fire;
  For despised love is crueller than the pit,
And bitterer than the vulture's beak desire.

V

Hell holds no Sisyphus who, with toil and pain,
Still rolls the huge stone up the hill in vain.
  But he is Sisyphus who, athirst for power,
Fawns on the crowd, and toils and fails to gain

VI

The crowd's vile suffrage. What a doom is his—
Abased and unrewarded! Is not this
Ever to roll the huge stone up the hill,
And see it still rebounding to the abyss?

VII

Oh forms of fear, oh sights and sounds of woe!
The shadowy road down which we all must go
Leads not to these, but from them. Hell is here,
Here in the broad day. Peace is there below.

VIII

Think yet again, if still your fears protest,
Think how the dust of this broad road to rest
Is homely with the feet of all you love,
The wisest, and the bravest, and the best.

IX

Ancus has gone before you down that road.
Scipio, the lord of war, the all-dreaded goad
  Of Carthage, he too, like his meanest slave,
Has travelled humbly to the same abode.

X

Thither the singers, and the sages fare,
Thither the great queens with their golden hair.
  Homer himself is there with all his songs;
And even my mighty Master's self is there.

XI

There too the knees that nursed you, and the clay
That was a mother once, this many a day
  Have gone. Thither the king with crowned brows
Goes, and the weaned child leads him on the way.

XII

Brother and friend, and art thou still averse
To tread that road? And will the way be worse
For thee than them? Dost thou disdain or fear
To tread the road of babes, and emperors?

XIII

Is life so sweet a thing, then, even for those
On whom it smiles in all its bravest shows?
See, in his marble hall the proud lord lies,
And seems to rest, but does not know repose.

XIV

"Bring me my chariot," to his slaves he cries.
The chariot comes. With thundering hoofs he flies—
Flies to his villa, where the calm arcades
Prophesy peace, and fountains cool the skies.

XV

Vain are the calm arcades, the fountain's foam,
Vain the void solitude he calls a home.
"Bring me my chariot," like a hunted thing
He cries once more, and thunders back to Rome.

XVI

So each man strives to flee that secret foe
Which is himself. But move he swift or slow,
That Self, for ever punctual at his heels,
Never for one short hour will let him go.

XVII

How, could he only teach his eyes to see
The things that can, the things that cannot be,
He would hail the road by which he shall at last
Escape the questing monster, and be free!

XVIII

He shall escape it even by that same way
On which fear whispers him 'twill turn to bay :
  For on that road the questing monster dies
Like a man's shadow on a sunless day.

XIX

Brother and friend, this life brings joy and ease
And love to some, to some the lack of these—
  Only the lack ; to others tears and pain ;
But at the last it brings to all the peace

XX

That passes understanding. Sweet, thrice sweet,
This healing Gospel of the unplumbed retreat,
  Where, though not drinking, we shall no more thirst,
And meeting not, shall no more wish to meet.

VII

Scire licet nobis nihil esse in morte timendum

I

"THY wife, thy home, the child that climbed thy knee
Are sinking down like sails behind the sea."
Breathe to the dying this; but breathe as well,
"All love for these shall likewise pass from thee."

II

Brother, if I should watch their last light shine
In those loved eyes, those dying ears of thine
Should hear me murmur what, when my hour comes,
I would some friend might murmur into mine.

III

Rest, rest, perturbéd bosom—heart forlorn,
With thoughts of ended joys, and evil borne,
  And—worse—of evil done : for they, like thee,
Shall rest—those others thou hast made to mourn.

IV

Even if there lurk behind some veil of sky
The fabled Maker, the immortal Spy,
  Ready to torture each poor life he made,
Thou canst do more than God can—thou canst die.

V

Will not the thunders of thy God be dumb
When thou art deaf for ever? Can the Sum
  Of all things bruise what is not? Nay—take heart;
For where thou goest, thither no God can come.

VI

Rest, brother, rest. Have you done ill or well,
Rest, rest. There is no God, no Gods, who dwell
  Crowned with avenging righteousness on high,
Nor frowning ministers of their hate in Hell.

VII

None shall accuse thee, none shall judge: for lo,
Those others have forgotten long ago:
  And all thy sullied drifts of memory
Shall lie as white, shall lie as cold as snow:

VIII

And no vain hungering for the joys of yore
Gone with the vanished sunsets, nor the sore
  Torn in your heart by all the ills you did,
Nor even the smart of those poor ills you bore;

IX

And no omnipotent wearer of a crown
Of righteousness, nor fiend with branded frown
  Swart from the flame, shall break or reach your rest,
Or stir your temples from the eternal down.

X

Flakes of the water, on the waters cease!
Soul of the body, melt and sleep like these.
  Atoms to atoms—weariness to rest.
Ashes to ashes—hopes and fears to peace!

PASSAGES

FROM LUCRETIUS 'DE RERUM NATURA'

Which form the Basis of the Preceding Poem

I

I

SUAVE mari magno vexantibus aequora ventis
E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem ;
Non quia vexari quemquam est iucunda voluptas,
Set quibus ipse malis careas quia cernere suave est.

It is sweet when winds are troubling the waters on the great deep, to watch from land the great labours of another ; not because there is any light-hearted pleasure in knowing that another is suffering, but because it is pleasant to realise from what sufferings you yourself are free.—Lucretius, Book ii. 1-4.

II

Per campos instructa tua sine parte pericli
Suave etiam belli certamina magna tueri.

It is also sweet to behold, without any peril to yourself, the great forces of war arrayed for battle along the plains.—Book ii. 5, 6.

III

Sed nil dulcius est bene quam munita tenere
Edita doctrina sapientum templa serena ;
Despicere unde queas alios passimque videre
Errare,

But nothing is sweeter than to occupy the well-defended serene heights of the wise, built high with learning, from which you may be able to look down on others, and see them wandering (*Ibid.* 7-10),

IV

atque viam palantes quaerere vitae,
Certare ingenio, contendere nobilitate,
Noctes atque dies niti praestante labore
Ad summas emergere opes rerumque potiri.

and straying in all directions in search of the path of life, contending in intellect, in pride of birth, and struggling with hard labour day and night to rise to wealth, and seize on the government of affairs.—*Ibid.* 10-13.

V

O miseras hominum mentes! o pectora caeca!
Qualibus in tenebris vitae quantisque periclis
Degitur hoc aevi quodcumque est! Nonne videtis
Nil aliud sibi naturam latrare,

Oh miserable minds of men! oh blind breasts! In what shadows of life, in what perils such life as is yours

is passed! Do not you see that Nature demands for herself no more than this (Book ii. 14-16)—

VI

—nisi ut cui
Corpore seiunctus dolor absit, mente fruatur
Iucundo sensu cura semota metuque?

—that he from whose body care is removed and absent, may enjoy his mind with pleasure, freed from care and fear?—*Ibid.* 17-19.

Ergo corpoream ad naturam pauca videmus
Esse opus omnino, quae demant cumque dolorem
Delicias quoque uti multas substernere possint.

We see, therefore, that but few things are necessary to the nature of the body, in order to ward off pain, and to give us many pleasures.—*Ibid.* 20-22.

VII

Si non aurea sunt iuvenum simulacra per aedes
Lampadas igniferas manibus retinentia dextris,
Lumina nocturnis epulis ut suppeditentur,
Nec domus argento fulget auroque renidet,
Nec citharae reboant laqueata aurataque templa ;

If there are not in your houses, golden statues of youths, holding burning lamps in their hands, to supply light to the midnight feast; if their hall shines not with silver, nor glitters with gold, nor the lyre makes the fretted and gilded roofs resound (*Ibid.* 24-28);

VIII

Quum tamen inter se prostrati in gramine molli
Propter aquae rivum sub ramis arboris altae
Non magnis opibus iucunde corpora curant.

nevertheless when they have stretched themselves on the soft grass, near a rivulet of water, under the

branches of a tree, they, with no great riches, so far as the senses go, have a happy life enough.—Book ii. 29-31.

IX

Nec calidae citius decedunt corpore febres
Textilibus si in picturis ostroque rubenti
Iacteris, quam si in plebeia veste cubandum est.

Nor do hot fevers depart sooner from your body, if you are tossed on woven pictures and blushing purple, than if you have to lie under a plebeian coverlet.—*Ibid.* 34-36.

X AND XI

Quapropter quoniam nil nostro in corpore gazae
Proficiunt neque nobilitas neque gloria regni,
Quod superest animo quoque nil prodesse putandum.

Wherefore since neither treasures, nor nobility, nor the glory of a kingdom are of any profit to the body,

we must deem also that they are of no profit to the mind.—*Ibid.* 37-39.

XII

Si non forte tuas legiones per loca campi
Fervere quum videas, belli simulacra cientes,
His tibi tum rebus timefactae religiones
Effugiunt animo pavidae, mortisque timores.

Unless, perhaps, when you see your legions moving themselves along the places of the plain, stirring up images of war, the terrors of religion and the dread of death, frightened by these things, flee panic-stricken from your mind.—*Ibid.* 41-44.

XIII TO XIX

Aeternas quoniam poenas in morte timendum,

Since men [as they now believe] have to fear an eternity of torment when they die (Book i. 111),

Metus ille foras praeceps Acherontis agendus,
Funditus humanam qui vitam turbat ab imo
Omnia suffundens mortis nigrore, neque ullam
Esse voluptatem liquidam puramque relinquit.

that fear of Acheron must be driven headlong from our minds utterly which now suffuses all things with the darkness of death, nor allows any pleasure to remain to us clear and pure.—Book iii. 37-40.

II

I

HUNC igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necesse est
Non radii solis neque lucida tela diei
Discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque.

This terror and these shadows of the mind must be dispersed, not by the rays of the sun, or the lucid darts of day, but by the knowledge of nature and of reason.—Book iii. 91-93.

II TO IV

E tenebris tantis tam clarum extollere lumen
Qui primus potuisti illustrans commoda vitae,
Te sequor, o Graiae gentis decus, inque tuis nunc
Fixa pedum pono pressis vestigia signis.

Thou, who from so great darkness wert first able to lift so shining a light, illuminating the blessings of life, Thee, oh glory of the Grecian race, do I follow, and plant my feet in thy footprints.—Book iii. 1-4.

Ipse Epicurus [qui] . . . omnes
Restinxit, stellas exortus uti aetherius sol.

Epicurus, who extinguishes the lights of all other men, as the risen sun extinguishes the stars.—*Ibid.* 1055.

V

Humana ante oculos foede quum vita iaceret
In terris oppressa gravi sub religione
Quae caput a coeli regionibus ostendebat
Horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans,
Primum Graius homo mortales tollere contra
Est oculos ausus primusque obsistere contra.

When human life lay shamefully grovelling before our eyes, bowed to the dust beneath the heavy weight of

religion, which displayed its head from the regions of the heavens, threatening mortals with her hideous aspect, a man of Greece was the first to raise mortal eyes against her, and make a stand against her.—Book i. 63-68.

VI

Quem nec fama deum nec fulmina nec minitanti
Murmure compressit coelum.

Whom neither tales of Gods, nor lightnings, nor the heaven with its threatening murmurs repressed.—*Ibid.* 69, 70.

VII

Ergo vivida vis animi pervicit et extra
Processit longe flammantia moenia mundi
Atque omne immensum peragravit mente animoque,
Unde refert nobis victor quid possit oriri,
Quid nequeat.

Therefore the vivid strength of his mind conquered, and proceeded far beyond the flaming walls of the universe, and in mind and thought traversed the whole vast of space; and hence triumphant he brings back to us the knowledge of what can arise and exist, and what cannot.—Book i. 73-76.

VIII

Nam simul ac ratio tua coepit vociferari
Naturam rerum, haud divina mente coactam,
Diffugiunt animi terrores, moenia mundi
Discedunt. Totum video per inane geri res.

For as soon as thy reason begins to shout aloud the nature of things—nature not ruled by the mind of any deity—the terrors of the mind flee away; the walls of the universe open; and I see the process of things in all the void of space.—Book iii. 14-17.

IX TO XI

Apparet Divum numen sedesque quietae,
Quas neque concutiunt venti nec nubila nimbis
Adspergunt neque nix acri concreta pruina
Cana cadens violat, semperque innubilus aether
Integer et large diffuso lumine ridet.
Omnia suppeditat porro natura neque ulla
Res animi pacem delibat tempore in ullo.

The divinity of the gods appears, and their tranquil seats, which no winds shake nor clouds sprinkle with mist, nor the white falling snow, congealed with sharp frost, violates; but the pure air is cloudless ever, and laughs with diffused light. Nature, too, provides the gods with all things; nor does anything ever take their peace of heart away from them.—*Ibid.* 18-24.

XII TO XIV

At contra nusquam apparent Acherusia templa
Nec tellus obstat quin omnia dispiciantur.

But on the other hand, though the earth does not hinder a complete view of everything, the Acherusian abodes are to be seen nowhere.—Book iii. 25-26.

XV TO XVII

His ibi me rebus quaedam divina voluptas
Percipit atque horror.

Under the influence of these spectacles, a certain divine pleasure and awe takes hold of me.—*Ibid.* 28-29.

Natura . . . corpus inani
Et quod inane autem est finiri corpore cogit,
Ut sic alternis infinita omnia reddat.

Nature compels body to be bounded with space, and empty space to be bounded by body, so that by these mutual limits she may render all things infinite.—Book i. 1009-1011.

Minui rem quamque videmus
Et quasi longinquo fluere omnia cernimus aevo
. . . . . .
Quum tamen incolumis videatur summa manere.

We see that all things are diminished and flow away through length of time; but the great sum of things is seen to remain undecayed.—Book ii. 68-71.

III

I

MUTAT enim mundi naturam totius aetas
Ex alioque alius status excipere omnia debet,
Nec manet ulla sui similis res. Omnia migrant.

For time changes the nature of the entire universe, and one condition of things after another must succeed in all things: nor does anything abide like itself. All things move and change.—Book v. 828-830.

II

Sic igitur magni quoque circum moenia mundi
Expugnata dabunt labem putresque ruinas.

So likewise the walls of the great universe assailed on all sides [by age and the attack of hostile atoms]

shall suffer decay, and fall in mouldering ruin.—Book ii. 1144, 1145.

III

Quare etiam atque etiam tales fateare necesse est
Esse alios alibi congressus materiai
Qualis hic est avido complexu quem tenet aether.

Wherefore again and again it is necessary that you admit the existences of other aggregates of matter elsewhere, such as the earth, which the air holds in its close embrace.—*Ibid.* 1061-1063.

Iamque adeo fracta est aetas effoetaque tellus.

Already the age of the world is broken, and the earth worn out.—*Ibid.* 1150.

IV

Magnam partem sol detrahit aestu . . .
Praeterea docui multum quoque tollere nubes
Humorem, magno conceptum ex aequore ponti.

The sun with its heat draws off a large part of the sea. I have shown thee also how the clouds take off much drawn by them from the vast surface of the deep.—Book v. 617, 628, 629.

V

Et inter se mortales mutua vivunt.
Augescunt aliae gentes, aliae minuuntur,
Inque brevi spatio mutantur saecla animantum.

The races of mortals subsist by interchange. Some races increase, some diminish, and in a brief space of time the generations of the living are changed.—Book ii. 76-78.

VI

Pereunt imbres, ubi eos pater aether
In gremium matris terrai praecipitavit;
At nitidae surgunt fruges ramique virescunt.

The rains die when father aether has precipitated them into the lap of mother earth; but the shining fruits rise, and the branches of the trees grow green.—Book i. 251-253.

VIII AND IX

Nam quodcumque suis mutatum finibus exit,
Continuo hoc mors est illius quod fuit ante.

For whatsoever thing is changed, and loses its distinguishing qualities, this change is the instant death of the thing which was before.—Book ii. 753, 754.

IX, X, AND XI

Quod genus e thuris glebis evellere odorem
Haud facile est quin intereat natura quoque eius.
Sic animi atque animae naturam corpore toto
Extrahere haud facile est quin corpora dissolvantur.

For as you cannot tear away the scent from balls of frankincense, without at the same time destroying its

whole nature, so you cannot extract the mind and soul from the whole body, without the body being dissolved. —Book iii. 327-330.

XV AND XVI

Tum porro puer, ut saevis proiectus ab undis
Navita, nudus humi iacet, infans, indigus omni
Vitali auxilio, quum primum in luminis oras
Nixibus ex alvo matris natura profudit
Vagituque locum lugubri complet, ut aequum est
Cui tantum in vita restat transire malorum.

Moreover the babe, like a sailor cast up by the fierce waves, lies speechless, without all vital support, naked upon the ground, where first nature with pain has sent it from its mother's womb, forth into the regions of light; and it fills the air with a dismal wailing, as is right for one for whom in life so many sorrows remain to be passed through.—Book v. 222-227.

XVII

Praeterea gigni pariter cum corpore et una
Crescere sentimus pariterque senescere mentem.

Besides we see the mind to be born with the body, to grow with the body, and to decay with it.—Book iii. 446-447.

XIX

Nequeunt ullius corporis esse
Sensus ante ipsam genitam naturam animantis,
Nimirum quia materies disiecta tenetur
Aere fluminibus terris.

The senses of no living thing can exist before the substance of the living thing itself is got together; and naturally so, because till then the materials are dispersed in the air, the rivers, and in the earth.—Book ii. 936-939.

XXI

Nam sua cuique locis ex omnibus omnia plagis
Corpora distribuuntur et ad sua saecla recedunt.
Humor ad humorem, terreno corpore terra
Crescit et ignem ignes procudunt aetheraque aether.

For to every body from all regions of space are contributed by atomic agitation its own congruous atoms; moisture to moisture; earth to earth; fire to fire; air to air.—Book ii. 1112-1115.

IV

I

NIL igitur mors est ad nos neque pertinet hilum,
Quandoquidem natura animi mortalis habetur.

Death therefore is nothing, and has nothing to do with us, since the nature of the mind is mortal.—Book iii. 842, 843.

II AND III

Et velut anteacto nil tempore sensimus aegri,
Ad confligendum venientibus undique Poenis,
Omnia quum belli trepido concussa tumultu
Horrida contremuere sub altis aetheris auris,
In dubioque fuere utrorum ad regna cadendum
Omnibus humanis esset terraque marique :—

And as, in past time, we felt no trouble ourselves, when the Carthaginians gathered from all sides to conflict, and when all things with the terrifying tumult of war trembled under the high air of heaven; and it was doubtful under the sway of which power the rule of all things human, in land and sea, should fall:—(Book iii. 843-849.)

IV AND V

Sic, ubi non erimus, quum corporis atque animaï
Discidium fuerit quibus e sumus uniter apti,
Scilicet haud nobis quidquam, qui non erimus tum,
Accidere omnino poterit sensumque movere,
Non si terra mari miscebitur et mare coelo.

So when we shall cease to be, and when the disruption shall come of that soul and body of which we are jointly composed, it is certain that to us, who shall not then exist, nothing will be able to happen, or to rouse

our feelings, not even if the earth shall be mingled with the sea, and the sea with heaven.—*Ibid.* 850-854.

VI

Respice item quam nil ad nos anteacta vetustas
Temporis aeterni fuerit, quam nascimur ante.
Hoc igitur speculum nobis natura futuri
Temporis exponit post mortem denique nostram.
Num quid horribile apparet? Num triste videtur
Quidquam? Nonne omni somno securius extat?

Consider also how all the endless time that passed before we were born was nothing to us. This does nature hold up to us as a mirror, of that time to come, which shall be when we are dead. Does anything horrible appear? Is anything sad seen? Is not what you see there calmer than any sleep?—*Ibid.* 985-990.

VII TO IX

Nam iam non domus accipiet te laeta, neque uxor
Optima nec dulces occurrent oscula nati
Praeripere et tacita pectus dulcedine tangent . . .
Illud in his rebus non addunt, Nec tibi earum
Iam desiderium insidet rerum insuper ulla.

For now [say the mourners] your pleasant home shall never again receive you, nor your well-loved wife, nor your tender little ones run to you to snatch your kisses, and touch your heart with a silent sweetness. [The mourners say this, but] they never think of adding, Nor shall any longer any desire for these things remain with you.—Book iii. 907-913.

X TO XIII

Quod bene si videant animo dictisque sequantur,
Dissolvant animi magno se angore metuque.
Tu quidem ut es lecto sopitus, sic eris aevi

Quod superest cunctis privatu' doloribus aegris ;
At nos horrifico cinefactum te prope busto
Insatiabiliter deflebimus ; aeternumque
Nulla dies nobis moerorem e pectore demet.

Which truth, if men would see with their minds, and follow it with their words, they would free themselves from much sorrow and fear of mind. [Then would they say to the dying] You laid to sleep on your bed, will be as you are for ever, freed from all cark and care ; but we standing by you, never shall cease weeping for your loss ; nor will ever the day come to our lives which will take our abiding sorrow from our hearts.—*Ibid.* 914-921.

V

I

DENIQUE si vocem rerum natura repente
Mittat et hoc alicui nostrum sic increpet ipsa :—

Lastly, if the nature of things should suddenly utter a voice, and herself thus upbraid any one of us :—(Book iii. 944, 945.)

II

Quid tibi tantopere est mortalis quod nimis aegris
Luctibus indulges? quid mortem congemis ac fles?

What good cause have you, oh mortal, to indulge in this immoderate grief? Why do you bemoan and weep over your coming death?—*Ibid.* 946, 947.

III AND IV

Sin ea quae fructus quumque es periere profusa
Vitaque in offenso est, cur amplius addere quaeris?

But if these things, of which you have had the use, have been poured out and wasted, and life is hateful to you, why seek to add to it?—*Ibid.* 953, 954.

V AND VI

Nam gratum fuerit tibi vita anteacta priorque
Et non omnia pertusum congesta quasi in vas
Commoda perfluxere atque ingrata interiere;
Cur non ut plenus vitae conviva recedis
Aequo animoque capis securam, stulte, quietem?

For if your past life has been grateful to you, and all your blessings have not, as though poured into a leaky vessel, flowed away and been lost, why not, like a guest

sated at the banquet of life, retire, and with calm mind take your rest that never will be broken?—Book iii. 948-952.

VII TO X

Cur . . .
Nec potius vitae finem facis atque laboris?
Nam tibi praeterea quod machiner inveniamque,
Quod placeat, nihil est; eadem sunt omnia semper.
. . . eadem tamen omnia restant,
Omnia si pergas vivendo vincere saecla.

Why not rather wish [instead of living on] to make an end of life and sorrow at once? For there is nothing further which I could contrive or find out to please you. All things are always the same . . . You would find them always the same, even if you outlasted all the ages in living.—*Ibid.* 958-962.

XII

Quid respondemus, nisi iustam intendere litem,
Naturam et veram verbis exponere causam ?

What do we answer to all this, but that nature brings a just charge against us, and sets forth a true case, in so speaking ?—*Ibid.* 962, 963.

VI

I

ATQUE ea nimirum quaecunque Acherunte profundo
Prodita sunt esse, in vita sunt omnia nobis.

And those things which are said to be in the depths of hell, really all of them happen to us, not there, but in life.—Book iii. 991, 992.

II

Nec miser impendens magnum timet aere saxum
Tantalus, ut fama est, cassa formidine torpens :
Sed magis in vita divum metus urget inanis
Mortales casumque timent quem cuique ferat fors.

Nor does any miserable Tantalus, as is said, stupid with blind fear, dread the great rock hanging above

him in the air. But in this life an empty fear of the gods oppresses mortals; and they dread the fall that chance may bring to each.—*Ibid.* 993-996.

III

Nec Tityon volucres ineunt Acherunte iacentem
Nec quid sub magno scrutentur pectore quidquam
Perpetuam aetatem poterunt reperire profecto . . .
Nec tamen aeternum poterit perferre laborem
Nec praebere cibum proprio de corpore semper.

Nor do the birds penetrate Tityos as he lies in Acheron; nor, however his huge breast might be explored, could they find food there for infinite time . . . Nor could he himself endure the eternal pain, nor supply food always from his body.—*Ibid.* 997-1004.

IV

Sed Tityos nobis hic est, in amore iacentem
Quem volucres lacerant atque exest anxius angor.

But he is a Tityos amongst us, whom, as he lies in love, the birds of passion tear, and anxious disquiet eats.—Book iii. 1005-1009.

V

Sisyphus in vita quoque nobis ante oculos est
Qui petere a populo fasces saevasque secures
Imbibit et semper victus tristisque recedit.

A Sisyphus likewise is before our eyes in this life, in him who sets himself to seek from the voters the fasces and the fierce axes, and retires always beaten and sad.—*Ibid.* 1008-1010.

VI

Nam petere imperium quod inane est nec datur unquam
Atque in eo semper durum sufferre laborem,
Hoc est adverso nixantem trudere monte
Saxum quod tamen a summo iam vertice rursum
Volvitur et plani raptim petit aequora campi.

For to seek power, which is empty in itself, and is moreover not gained, and constantly to endure hard labour in the pursuit of it, this is to hurl the stone with pain up the adverse hill, which yet is even now rolled down again from the summit, and impetuously seeks the surface of the open plain.—*Ibid.* 1011-1015.

VII

Hinc Acherusia fit stultorum denique vita.

From fears of the torments of hell, the life of fools becomes a hell itself.—*Ibid.* 1036.

VIII

Hoc etiam tibi tute interdum dicere possis.

This too you will also be able to say to yourself, [to give yourself courage].—*Ibid.* 1037.

IX

Lumina sis oculis etiam bonus Ancu' reliquit . . .
Scipiades, belli fulmen, Carthaginis horror,
Ossa dedit terrae proinde ac famul infimus esset.

Even the good Ancus has deserted the light with his eyes . . . Scipio, the thunderbolt of war, the dread of Carthage, gave his bows to the earth, as though he were his lowest slave.—Book iii. 1038, and 1047, 1048.

X

Adde repertores doctrinarum atque leporum,
Adde Heliconiadum comites; quorum unus Homerus . . .
Ipse Epicurus obit decurso lumine vitae.

Add to these the inventors of the sciences and the graces, and the companies of the Muses, of whom Homer is one . . . Epicurus died likewise, when his life's light had run its course.—*Ibid.* 1049, 1050, and 1055.

XIII

Exit saepe foras magnis ex aedibus ille,
Esse domi quem pertaesum est.

Often he goes forth out of his vast halls, who has grown weary of remaining at home.—*Ibid.* 1073, 1074.

XIV

Currit agens mannos ad villam praecipitanter,
Auxilium tectis quasi ferre ardentibus instans.

He hastens precipitately to his villa hurrying on his horses, as though his house was on fire, and he were hastening to put out the flames.—*Ibid.* 1076, 1077.

XV

Oscitat extemplo, tetigit quum limina villae,
Aut abit in somnum gravis atque oblivia quaerit,
Aut etiam properans urbem petit atque revisit.

But he has no sooner touched the threshold of his villa than he yawns, or falls heavily to sleep, and

heavily seeks forgetfulness; or even hurrying back again, betakes himself once more to the city.—Book iii. 1078-1080.

XVI

Hoc se quisque modo fugit; at quem scilicet, ut fit,
Effugere haud potis est, ingratis haeret, et odit
Propterea, morbi quia causam non tenet aeger.

In this way each man flees from himself; but this self, whom, as it happens, he cannot escape from, still clings to him, and he hates it; for he, the sick man, does not know the cause of his disease.—*Ibid.* 1081-1083.

XVII

Quam bene si videat, iam rebus quisque relictis
Naturam primum studeat cognoscere rerum,
Temporis aeterni quoniam, non unius horae,
Ambigitur status, in quo sit mortalibus omnis
Aetas, post mortem quae restat cunque manendo.

Which cause if everybody could understand, each, in the first place, all other pursuits being left, would study to learn the nature of things; since what is at issue is the state not of one hour, but of that eternity in which the whole age of mortals—whatsoever may remain of it—after death must continue.—*Ibid.* 1084-1088.

XX

Tanquam in morte mali cum primis hoc sit eorum,
Quod sitis exurat miseros atque arida torreat,
Aut aliae cuius desiderium insideat rei.

As if at their death this would be their chief evil, that parching thirst should burn and dry them up in their wretchedness, or the vain longing for some other thing settle on them.—*Ibid.* 939-941.

VII

III AND IV

QUARE religio pedibus subiecta vicissim
Obteritur, nos exaequat victoria coelo.

By means of whose science religion in its turn lies bruised under our feet, and his victory makes us equal with heaven.—Book i. 78, 79.

V

Scire licet nobis nihil esse in morte timendum
Nec miserum fieri qui non est posse neque hilum
Differre an ullo fuerit iam tempore natus,
Mortalem vitam mors quum immortalis ademit.

We may be assured that in death there is nothing to be dreaded by us; that he who does not exist cannot be

made miserable; and that it is nothing to a man that he was ever born at all, when once immortal death has taken away mortal life.—Book iii. 879-882.

IX

Nec quisquam in barathrum nec Tartara deditur atra.

Nor is any one ever given to the pit, or the night of Tartarus.—*Ibid.* 979.

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